



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

claims an antiquity far beyond the traditional limit. The chaotic manifoldness of nature has given place to a threefold unity—a unity of substance, a unity of force, and a unity of process. All changes of matter, lifeless and living alike, are the expression of transformations of a stock of energy which suffers neither addition nor subtraction. From the nebula to man we find no break in the continuity of evolution. Meteors have clustered into suns and planets. The incandescent surface of the globe has wrinkled into continents and oceans. The simplest forms of life have developed in endless ramification into the varied species of plants and animals, till animal life has grown divine in man himself.

And we have recognized that these changes in our thought of the universe cannot but work corresponding changes in our thought of God and of his revelation to man. We have ceased to look to the Bible for a revelation of the plan and history of the universe, or to regard the Bible as inerrant. The “carpenter God” has vanished from a universe which we have come to regard as a growth and not as a building. The metaphysical dogma of the duality of essence in human nature has been rendered uncertain by the tendencies of biological science. Evolutionary anthropology must regard the fall of man as potential rather than actual. The tendencies of scientific thought have compelled us to reject as unhistoric some of the Biblical narratives of miracle, and to regard others as more or less doubtful.

Yet these changes of belief involve the abandonment of no essential doctrine of Christianity. A Heavenly Father, a risen Saviour, an inspired and inspiring Bible, an immortal hope, are still ours.

Such a book will surely be useful in its day, though neither those who reverence authority, nor those who doubt all things that they may know the more, are fully satisfied by it.

C. R. BARNES.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT RESTATED.¹

HERE are two books with essentially one theme, though separated in time of publication by but little more than a year. The former is a serious, elaborate, and learned discussion of some 330 pages; the latter is a series of three lectures apologetic of the position taken in its predecessor and somewhat, though not offensively, polemical. Ultra-conservative readers will welcome both, though they will find nothing new in either.

The purpose of these two books is to re-establish and reinforce the doctrine of the strictly substitutionary and propitiatory death of Christ,

¹ *The Death of Christ: Its Place and Interpretation in the New Testament*, 1902. *The Atonement and the Modern Mind*, 1903. By JAMES DENNEY. New York: Armstrong & Son. 334 pages, \$1.50; 159 pages, \$1.

which the author thinks is frankly denied or entirely ignored in a considerable part of the preaching and the religious writing of the present day.

In his main book, after an introduction in which he maintains the unity of the New Testament, discusses certain "misused distinctions" such as historical and dogmatic, biblical and systematic, material and formal, and posits the death of Jesus on the cross as a subject which is treated by the New Testament writers as "of central and permanent importance to the Christian faith," the author proceeds to the proof of this proposition by an examination of the synoptic gospels, the earliest Christian preaching as illustrated in the first half of Acts and the first epistle of St. Peter, the epistles of St. Paul, the epistle to the Hebrews, and the Johannine writings, among which he includes the Apocalypse. The volume concludes with a *concio ad clerum* on "the importance of the death of Christ in preaching and in theology."

It is impossible in the space at my command to give a detailed review of Dr. Denney's exposition and argument; nor is it necessary. It will suffice to set forth his main contention. But some notice must be taken of his first chapter, for in that he lays the basis of his claim that the death of Jesus is "central and dominant" in the synoptic gospels and in the mind of Jesus himself.

It may be said at the outset—not by way of compliment, but in frank acknowledgment of the truth—that the author is learned and carries his learning easily; he is familiar with current theological thought on the continent as well as in Great Britain; he is clever and nimble in argument, though wanting at once in vision and in a certain robust sense for fact; he is courteous to opponents, albeit sometimes a bit mordant in sarcastic allusion or remark; and he is thoroughly religious—in the theological sense. But, though he occasionally uses warm language, there is no inherent heat and glow in his expression. He reaches, to his own satisfaction, certain tremendous conclusions; but he never quickens the pulse of his reader, perhaps because, though convinced, he is never quite convincing. Evidently he has strong conviction, but it is conviction of the head rather than of the heart, and his logic never takes fire.

The fundamental difficulty with Dr. Denney is that he is attempting to resuscitate a doctrine which is dead. His attempt is among the ablest as well as the most recent, but it fails. The reason for his failure is inherent in his thesis: he is maintaining that which is unreal or immoral, or both; and from it the ingenuous mind irresistibly revolts. Curiously he illustrates his own words, used in criticism of a remark of Schmiedel's:

It is difficult to believe that this sort of thing is written seriously: if courtesy compels us to acknowledge that it is, we can only draw the melancholy conclusion that it is possible for the human mind to be serious even when it has completely lost contact with reality. (P. 49.)

In discussing the testimony of the synoptics as to the "central and dominant" position of Jesus' death in the record, Dr. Denney devotes himself mainly to three critical moments—the baptism, the prediction uttered in the region of Cæsarea Philippi, that is, within six months of the end, and the institution of the Supper. He cites also the sayings about the children of the bride-chamber fasting when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and about Jonah being "three days and three nights in the whale's belly." But these may be put aside as of little force in supporting his contention. The second and third instances are pertinent, as showing that Jesus rightly estimated the probable result of the hostility which was ripening against him among the Pharisees. But it is not easy to treat seriously Dr. Denney's handling of the report of Jesus' baptism. The evangelist says: "A voice came from heaven, Thou art my Son, the Beloved, in Thee I am well pleased." These words, according to our author, did not awaken in Jesus a sense of his messiahship, but spoke to and expressed a sense of messiahship already clearly developed. He says:

The Messianic consciousness in Jesus from the very beginning was one with the consciousness of the Servant of the Lord. The King, to whom Jehovah says, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee (Psalm 2:7) is at the same time (in the mind of Jesus) that mysterious Servant of Jehovah—"my beloved in whom I am well pleased"—whose tragic yet glorious destiny is adumbrated in the second Isaiah (42:1 ff.). It is not necessary to inquire how Jesus could combine beforehand two lines of anticipation which at the first glance seem so inconsistent with each other; the point is, that on the evidence before us, which seems to the writer as indisputable as anything in the Gospels, He did combine them, and therefore cannot have started on his ministry with the cloudless hopes which are sometimes ascribed to him.

One needs a good deal of patience and charity to treat such writing as this seriously. It is not only unhistorical and uncritical, but it is fanciful in the extreme. The same may be said of the assumption that

probably Jesus told the stories of his baptism and temptation often, giving more or less fully, with brief allusions to Old Testament words or fuller citation of them, such hints of His experience as His hearers could appreciate. (P. 14, note.)

As a matter of fact, nothing is more striking in the gospel stories than the high reserve of Jesus about his interior and deeper experiences. There is no trace of intimate confidences concerning himself. Dr. Denney even goes

so far as to find in the baptism of Jesus an explicit, dramatic fulfilment of Isaiah's words, "He was numbered with the transgressors!" After this we are not surprised when a similar drastic treatment draws out of the words about the children of the bride-chamber fasting when the bridegroom shall be no longer with them a distinct and conscious forecast by Jesus of his own death.

The exegetical and hermeneutical treatment of the Pauline, Johannine, and other writings which Dr. Denney reviews may be examined by the reader at his leisure, but there is nothing in it so fantastic as the preceding. It sets forth the author's belief that the whole significance of Jesus' appearance on the earth and life among men is concentrated in his death on the cross. That fact gives everything else its value. There is but one gospel, and that gospel is the substitutionary and propitiatory death of Jesus.

God has really done something in Christ on which the salvation of the world depends, and . . . it is a Christian duty to be intolerant of everything which ignores, denies, or explains it away. (P. 110.)

That "something done in Christ" has previously been defined thus:

Christ took on him the consequences of our sins—He made our responsibilities, as sin had fixed them, His own. (P. 98.)

For Dr. Denney

the whole secret of Christianity is contained in Christ's death, and in the believing abandonment of the soul to that death in faith. . . . The propitiatory death of Christ, as an all-transcending demonstration of love evokes in sinful souls a response which is *the whole of Christianity*.² (P. 178.)

The "all-transcending demonstration of love" is wholly in Jesus, who takes the sinner's place in a piacular death; and the old difficulty of conceiving divine forgiveness as real, when it is conditioned on a practical exhaustion of penalty, reappears. The grace of God is rather the grace of Jesus, and God remains the inexorable judge who revokes the sentence of condemnation because the law has been vindicated, or at least the divine ethical demand satisfied, and not because he is a compassionate Father graciously bestowing pardon on the penitent.

It is not often that one finds today so frank an acceptance of the idea that the relation to God of the sinner saved by grace is a forensic relation. Dr. Denney says:

The forensic theory of atonement, as it is called, is not unrelated to the ethico-mystical; it is not parallel to it; it is not a mistaken *ad hominem* or rather *ad Phariseum* mode of thought which ought to be displaced by the other; it has the essential eternal truth in it by which *and by which alone* the experiences are

² The italics are the author's.

generated in which the strength of the other is supposed to lie. (P. 184.) Mystical union [with Christ] owes its very being to that atonement outside of us, that finished work of Christ, which some would use it to discredit. (P. 185.)

The author's entire conception of God's relation to the world, in the process of salvation, is provincial to the last degree. He has no gospel for men of every race and time. Though he says that

there is nothing in the world so universally intelligible as the Cross; . . . the atoning death of Christ, as a revelation of God, is a thing in itself so intelligible, so correspondent to a universal need, so direct and universal in its appeal, that it must be the basis of a universal religion (p. 118);

yet in his theory the cross is unintelligible to anyone save the metaphysical theologian. Faith and motive to righteousness depend absolutely on a metaphysical notion of Christ's death, and salvation depends on an understanding of Christ's state of mind while undergoing the experience of dying—a state of mind which has never been disclosed save in a few obscure ejaculations on the cross. Says Dr. Denney:

No one is really saved from sin until he has in relation to it that mind which Christ had when He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. (P. 308.)

Faith is not a confident, restful, obedient trust in God, such as Jesus inculcated and exemplified; it is acceptance of an occult theory of atonement. Indeed, Dr. Denney even declares, "It is the Atonement which regenerates."

The simplicity of Jesus' gospel is gone, and in place of it is a theory of moral relations between personalities (there can be moral relations only between personalities, of course) which cuts the roots of morality. The process of salvation is fundamentally materialistic and magical.

The Christ who is the object of faith is the Christ whose death is the Atonement, and the faith which takes hold of Christ as He is held out in the gospel *conducts*, if we may use such a figure, *the virtue of the Atonement into the heart*.³ (Pp. 291 f.)

It is not surprising now that the author can say:

We are always establishing for ourselves, or letting others impose upon us, customs—whether intellectual, as creeds, or ethical, as conventional ways of being charitable or of worshipping God—which, though good in themselves, tend to corrupt the world just because they are customs: in other words, we are always tacitly denying that the death of Christ does full justice to law in every sense of the term, and that for those who believe in it law exists henceforth only in the divine glory of the Atonement, and in the life which it inspires. (P. 192.)

He frankly makes Christ inaccessible to the ingenuous youth who seeks to imitate him until he has apprehended him as a substitute for himself in

³ The italics here are mine.

a mysterious transaction in which Christ assumes, in an expiatory way, the full responsibility for his sins.

He may think at first [this "amiable and aspiring youth" who "is trying to imitate Jesus"] that he can identify himself with the Son of God at any point over the whole area of his life, but he discovers experimentally that this is not so. He finds out in a way surer than any logical demonstration that Christ is in the last resort as inaccessible to him as the God to whom he would draw near by imitating Christ, and that the only hope he has of getting to God in this way depends upon Christ's making Himself one with him in that responsibility for sin which separates him from the Father. His one point of contact with Christ, when his whole situation is seriously taken, is Christ's character as a propitiation for sin. (Pp. 300 f.)

The meaning of the author's main contention is fairly plain to one who is familiar with theological literature and modes of thought; but to the reader not thus prepared it must be obscure. Yet, like many others who have written on this theme, Dr. Denney is curiously elusive and unsatisfactory to the trained mind. He is not evasive so much as he is unable to state exactly what is accomplished by Christ in his substitutionary death. He says, it is true, that Christ takes the full responsibility of the sinner's sin. But what does this mean? How can moral responsibility be shifted from the guilty to the guiltless without destroying morality itself? The whole argument is only another statement of the old device for morally getting something for nothing, for acquiring righteousness without meeting the requirements which are absolutely essential to righteousness. It drags us again to the demoralizing conclusion that God achieves morality in man by a process which is immoral and fundamentally impossible outside the sophistries of theology.

The second book adds nothing of importance to the first. In a somewhat more polemical vein the author presents a preliminary definition of the subject, and then discusses "Sin and the Divine Reaction against It" and "Christ and Man in the Atonement."

PHILIP S. MOXOM.

SPRINGFIELD, MASS.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A PHILOSOPHY.

TO THOSE who knew Herbert Spencer only through that great system of philosophy which he has given to the world this account of his life and personality¹ will be a welcome acquisition, especially as it is written by

¹ *An Autobiography*. In two volumes; illustrated. New York: Appleton & Co., 1904. 655 and 603 pages.